

# **Gorgie Farm announce imminent closure**

**News has broken today that LOVE Learning, the charity which took over Gorgie Farm in 2019 may have no alternative but to hand back the keys when their lease from the council comes to an end.**

On their Facebook page LOVE Gorgie Farm announced: "Love Learning have regrettably announced that their intention to return the lease on Gorgie Farm to The City of Edinburgh Council. Love will begin a period of formal consultation with staff on 4 January 2023.

Love CEO, Lynn Bell, said: "We have tried everything to avoid this situation, however with Covid and now cost of living crisis we do not believe we are able to support the Farm alone moving forward."

CEC funding for the Farm was withdrawn in 2020 and over recent months LOVE have been seeking detailed discussions with The City of Edinburgh Council over funding and the future operations of the Farm. LOVE have developed a plan for the Farm, based on the development of a Care Farm and utilising buildings on the Farm for respite accommodation for Looked After Children. However, on preparation of the Love Learning 2021-22 accounts it became clear that Love was not able to take this forward without assistance.

Lynn added: "The support for Gorgie Farm from the public has been tremendous, and I would like to thank every single person who has supported the Farm over the last few years. Gorgie

Farm is unique, and it has the potential to deliver so much for so many. We know that changes could be made to raise funds and support wider Council objectives around looked after children and tackling poverty, but we are not able to take this proposal forward unaided.

“A partnership approach has always been central to our plans, but this partnership has not materialised. While we have had many positive individual conversations ultimately there is a need for detailed discussions and agreements to allow the redesign of the Farms operations to meet wider needs.”

Education and social care charity, LOVE Learning, took over the site of the former Gorgie City Farm in January after it went into liquidation in November 2019. LOVE Learning had organised a community consultation event, when visitors had the opportunity to tell the new operators about their hopes for the future of the urban farm, and the body promised to keep on using the site as an urban farm as part of its portfolio of environmental projects.



Gail Porter at Gorgie Farm with CEO of LOVE Learning Lynn Bell

and volunteers. Photo Martin McAdam

Cllr Dan Heap said: “After 50 years of operation, Gorgie Farm is an integral part of the Gorgie community, and it is impossible to imagine Gorgie without the fun, life and incredible services the Farm brings the area.

I think it is absolutely possible we can find a sustainable model for the Farm, and it is vital that all partners, including the City of Edinburgh Council, work together to achieve this.

I will be working closely with them to ensure this happens.”

Lorna Slater MSP for Lothian said: “I am sorry to hear that Gorgie Farm is facing closure.

“It was a pleasure to have visited the farm in September and to hear about the exciting future plans that had been set out for this much-loved community farm.

“When the farm was threatened with closure in 2019, Green MSPs and Councillors were at the heart of the campaign to save it. I will work closely with local councillor Dan Heap and all partners involved in the farm and do everything I can to help in ensuring that it can have a sustainable future.”



Depute Lord Provost Joan Griffiths at the opening of the LOVE Gorgie Farm